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USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · OFFICE OF INFORMATION · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

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CONSUMERS AND T-I-M-B-E-R

PROCUREMENT REPORT

CURRENT SERIAL FILE

Supply, Demand, and Prices. The rising lumber and plywood prices of 1971-72 have caused concern about the Nation's ability to meet future demands for wood products. This is a well-founded concern, according to USDA's Forest Service, unless some long-range plans are put into effect to assure adequate timber supplies. In the forthcoming 1970 Timber Review, the Forest Service reports that over the past three decades the use of pulp products climbed 235 percent, consumption of veneer and plywood increased an astonishing 475 percent, with overall demand for timber products increasing 70 percent. Comparable increases are expected through the end of this century, according to the study. The Review points out some possible solutions to the problems such as intensified forestry, better utilization of available supplies, and research in protection, harvesting and milling problems. It all boils down to growing enough trees to supply houses, furniture, paper and pulpwood products, toothpicks, and match sticks at prices consumers can afford -- and still leave forests to tramp around in and to maintain a desirable environment. "Outlook for Meeting Future Timber Demands," based on some of the 1970 Timber Review highlights, is available from the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Ask for Current Information Report Number 8.

THE FAMILY FOOD BILL

Where Does It All Go and Why? A popular USDA slide set and filmstrip, "Revelations of a Register Tape, or the Baffling Case of the Family Grocery Bill," are helping food shoppers unravel the mystery of the family food bill. The ten-minute presentation, recently updated, outlines in colorful mod art and narration the various things that influence the family food bill? Family size and food tastes, rising costs, convenience foods, supplies and weather -- to name a few. The 71-frame, 35-mm slide set and narrative guide is available for \$15.50 from the Photography Division, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. A filmstrip, which costs \$7.50 may be ordered from the Photo Lab, Inc., 3825 Georgia Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20011. A recording of the narration with music is available in a cassette from either source for \$3.00.



WINTER FOOD PREVIEW

Winter makes some special demands on your talents as a chef. Cookies, sweets, traditional foods, feasts, and entertaining all play important roles in December holidays. And, while holiday food fosters family togetherness during these weeks, well-balanced breakfasts and hearty lunches and dinners are important to help the family function better in the cold-weather months that follow.

Winter will test your skills as a shopper, too. With the extra food buying and the end of harvest abundance, prices you pay for food at the supermarket usually average higher. This situation prevailed last winter as prices rose, contributing to a 4-percent increase in food prices during all of 1972.

For the next few months, too, prices of all foods -- those eaten away from home as well as those bought at the market -- will rise, although the pace will be slower than last winter. Putting these increases in dollars and cents -- food which cost \$1.00 in 1967 cost an estimated \$1.24 in 1972 and may cost \$1.28 by mid-1973.

Despite this average uptrend in food prices, selected items will be priced at about the same level or lower, so some selective shopping and attention to sales at the supermarket can help keep the budget in trim. Your local markets are currently competing for holiday business with lots of specially priced items. Now's a good time to stock up on sale items for after the holidays.

KEEP UP YOUR FOOD'S STRENGTH

Conserve The Nutrients. You pay your money and you bring home your food. That's part of the picture. The other part is what you do with the food after you get it home. Making the best food buy is pointless unless the food is properly stored, prepared, and served to retain its nutritional and economical values. "Conserving the Nutritive Values in Foods," a popular USDA bulletin, gives some valuable and basic tips on how this can be accomplished. To quote some tips: To conserve the valuable nutrients and good flavor of milk, keep it cold, covered, and away from strong light. AND. . .Roasting beef to the rare stage conserves more thiamin than cooking it to the well-done stage. AND. . .Berries are highly perishable and lose vitamin C quickly if capped or bruised. AND. . .Vitamins are retained best when canned foods are kept in a cool place. AND. . .Many other such valuable pointers to help give your family the full advantage of the great variety of foods available. Single free copies of "Conserving the Nutritive Values in Foods" (G-90) may be requested from the Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

PLENTIFUL FOODS FOR DECEMBER

Food and Festivities. . .The two go together -- especially well at this time of the year. Holiday shoppers will find the December Plentiful Foods List a help in planning menus around the foods that should be good buys during the month. Leading the List is that traditional favorite -- turkey. Other foods include broiler-fryers, eggs, fresh cranberries, cranberry sauce, applesauce, fresh oranges, tangelos, tangerines, and dry beans. Looking into the coming year, the January Plentiful Foods List will include fresh oranges, frozen concentrated orange juice, canned orange juice, cranberry sauce, rice, dry beans, and broiler-fryers.

WINTER FOOD PREVIEW

This is especially true for citrus and cranberry products, both seasonally abundant now and in heavy supply. Stores will soon feature oranges and frozen orange juice and lemons are in larger supply this season.

Several staple foods are still going basically at 1971 prices, and will increase relatively little in the months ahead. The list includes flour, bakery products, rice, cooking oils, and tea.

Judging by national averages, bread and flour this Fall cost less than they did in Fall 1971. Prices now are rising a penny or two, though, to offset much higher costs of wheat this year.

Dairy products have been extra popular with shoppers this year, and cheese levels have leaped ahead. With a larger milk supply coming from the Nation's dairy farms, however, prices rises for a number of items have been quite limited. At last reading -- in October -- butter and evaporated milk cost less than a year earlier, and milk and ice cream were scarcely higher. Supplies have tightened recently so dairy prices will be up this Winter, but still represent a good protein buy.

Eggs, likewise, continue to offer a powerhouse of nutrition at a reasonable price. Supplies were heavy until this fall, and prices are rising after more than a year of unusually low prices. In fact, eggs sold for less in 1971 and 1972 than they did 10 years ago.

Now let's focus on red meats -- beef, pork, lamb, and veal.

Although beef prices eased earlier this Fall, prices of all red meats will rise further before the middle of 1973.

Actually, supplies of beef have risen this year, with both record-breaking beef production and larger imports. Yet output of pork, as well as lamb and veal, has been off, reducing overall red meat supplies. At the same time, when take-home pay goes up, as it did this year, meat buying, especially for beef takes an upturn. Meat prices, caught in this crossfire, have risen.

Looking ahead to 1973, red meat prices may stabilize or decline after mid-year, particularly prices for pork. As cattle producers continue to increase beef output during the first half of the year, pork production will increase enough to boost total meat supplies at the meat counter.

Like meat, vegetables and noncitrus fruits also are caught in a pinch of rising demand from shoppers at a time of steady or limited supplies.

Apples cost more, following the smallest crop since 1968. Sharply smaller crops are being reflected, too, in supplies and prices of fresh grapes and grape products, raisins, pears, plums, and prunes.

The canned and frozen fruit sections repeat this story with tighter supplies this winter.

Our fresh winter vegetables come from small, specialized areas of the Sunny South and from Mexican imports. Prices can fluctuate widely from week to week, but early indications point to an overall slight increase in supply.

Canned and frozen vegetables supplies should about match last winter, though there will be more canned corn and whole tomatoes. Prices may be fairly steady.

THE GOAL IS LUNCH

In Every School. A 350,000-member national organization, the U.S. Jaycees, has joined the U.S. Department of Agriculture in a drive to get a lunch program started in every school in the Nation. This cooperative effort is the result of a campaign by USDA's Food and Nutrition Service to encourage local initiative by local people to bring "no-program" schools into the National School Lunch Program. Nationally, there are 18,000 schools with a combined enrollment of $5\frac{1}{2}$ million children without food service. The "lunch in every school" drive is a follow-up on a recommendation made last spring by the National Advisory Council on Child Nutrition which urged all schools to have a food service within the next three years. The Food and Nutrition Service is currently meeting with local school officials around the country and has invited organizations interested in helping establish school lunch or breakfast programs in their communities to join the project. If your organization is interested, you may contact your State educational agency or the Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. A publication which describes a number of proven approaches to feeding children in schools with limited facilities is also available from the Food and Nutrition Service. The title is "What's So Hard About Feeding Kids?" (FNS-68) and it is free on request.

IT PAYS TO PLAN

Where To Go For What. For many communities and groups, help in turning ideas into working plans is coming from U.S. Department of Agriculture field personnel and associated State agencies. These experts-of-many-talents are providing important supporting aids and services to planners and planning organizations -- all the way from rural housing to soil survey information and aerial photographs helpful in land use planning. But where and to whom do you go for these and the other aids that are available? A useful little pamphlet has been prepared to point you in the right direction -- whether your plans are still just ideas or have reached the "where do we go from here" stage. "Selected Planning Aids of the U.S. Department of Agriculture," briefly describes the available planning aids and services and which USDA or State agency has them. Teachers, too, might find the publication of help in introducing students to some of the responsibilities of USDA and some of their own State agencies. Copies of the pamphlet can be requested from Service, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. Please request by title, "Selected Planning Aids of the U.S. Department of Agriculture."

JUICY FOOD FACTS

Citrus Is Popular. Americans drink an average of 20 pounds each per year of prepared frozen orange juice, plus 4 pounds of chilled orange juice. . . Four out of five oranges are not sold as fresh fruit, but as processed products. . . Foreign customers, particularly the Japanese, are eating millions of boxes of U.S. oranges, lemons, and grapefruit.

SERVICE is a monthly newsletter of consumer interest. It is designed for those who report to the individual consumer rather than for mass distribution. For information about items in this issue, write: Lillie Vincent, Editor of Service, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Telephone (202) 447-5437.